



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR WILDLIFE ANNOUNCED IN PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED 1991 BUDGET

John Turner, Director of the Department of the Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, today praised the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 1991 requesting a record \$936.4 million for wildlife management and conservation activities conducted by the agency. This is up significantly from the \$887 million appropriated by Congress for FY 1990.

Turner said, "This funding boost reflects implementation of President Bush's major environmental initiative, 'America the Beautiful,' which includes a 'Legacy '99' component. To complement the Administration's effort, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan developed an Interior Department facility rehabilitation program, also entitled 'Legacy '99'."

"America the Beautiful" provides important funding to help protect wetlands, strengthen our endangered species program, and acquire significant new wildlife lands. The budget initiative calls for \$140.5 million, including \$54.5 million for existing programs for endangered species and wetlands protection. "America the Beautiful" calls for an increase of \$11.9 million for these programs, and \$56.7 million for land acquisition and \$2.3 million for construction.

The Interior Department's "Legacy '99" program is a long-term effort to reduce the extensive backlog of rehabilitation projects at national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and research laboratories. It alone represents \$83.4 million within the Service's proposed budget.

Funding for the this initiative falls within the Service's principal operating account-Resource Management, and the Construction Account. In addition to rehabilitation projects, the initiative also calls for the clean-up of hazardous

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materials on Service lands, the repair of unsafe dams, and efforts to monitor and correct problems with underground storage tanks.

Also included in the "America the Beautiful" initiative is a total of \$30.5 million for funding the Service's Endangered Species Program, (excluding law enforcement activities). This is an increase of \$150,000 over the 1990 funding level. Increases are requested to accelerate listings and implement the 1988 amendments to the Endangered Species Act.

Additionally, \$35.9 million is requested for the agency's wetlands protection and conservation efforts. This funding will support the Service's wetlands programs such as restoration of privately owned wetlands, estuary studies, wetlands mapping, and various enhancement projects.

As a complement to this funding, the Administration is requesting establishment of a new account--the North American Waterfowl Conservation Fund--with \$15 million in new appropriations to implement the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international agreement aimed at protecting and enhancing wetlands, waterfowl, and numerous other wildlife species dependent upon this habitat type. Waterfowl populations have been at or near record lows during the 1980's. The \$15 million requested in appropriations would be added to \$10 million anticipated to be available primarily from interest on the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Fund. These funds will be used to implement the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and the Tripartite Agreement among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Goals will be implemented with the help of non-Federal matching of Federal contributions for land acquisition, wetlands restoration, and wetlands assistance to Canada and Mexico. The "America the Beautiful" initiative is subject to passage of authorizing legislation.

Other portions of the proposed Service budget call for \$1 million requested in appropriations for African elephant conservation to be used for the payment of rewards and assistance to African countries to improve the plight of this species whose populations have plummeted drastically during the last decade. In combination with donations made to the Service for African elephant conservation, an estimated \$1.3 million will be available for assistance activities. It should be noted that, of this amount, \$800,000 is a transfer from the Rewards and Operations Account to the African Elephant Conservation Fund.

Another increase of \$3.6 million is being requested to study potential rates and effects of global change and impacts of rising sea levels on coastal wetlands and the wildlife they harbor.